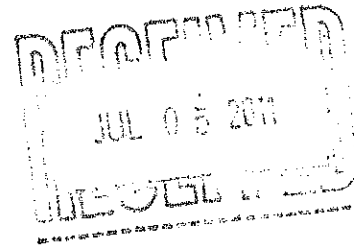


CALIFORNIA COASTAL COMMISSION

NORTH COAST DISTRICT OFFICE
710 E STREET • SUITE 200
EUREKA, CA 95501-6813
VOICE (707) 445-7833
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July 1, 2011

Dabe

Trever Parker, City Planner
City of Trinidad
P.O. Box 390
Trinidad, CA 95570

COPY

SUBJECT: Maintenance Activities on Trinidad Head

Dear Ms. Parker:

Thank you for your letter we received on June 6th regarding ongoing and periodic maintenance and other activities involving the roads and trails on Trinidad Head. We appreciate the efforts and time you, Karen Suicher, and the Public Works staff have taken to coordinate with us on the issue of which of the ongoing and periodic activities the City performs on Trinidad Head require coastal development permits and which do not. As we had discussed ahead of time, your letter describes the various activities and offers the City's opinion about which activities as described would require a coastal development permit and seeks the Commission staff's concurrence. The letter describes a number of different activities, many of which raise a number of issues and concerns that we have not yet been able to fully address. We will respond in detail to the entire list at a later date, but we understand that because of the rapid growth of vegetation, there is a pressing need to perform mowing and trimming activities to keep the trails and road on Trinidad clear and available for public access use. Therefore, we are responding now to the portion of your letter addressing such mowing and trimming within and around the trails and road so that the City can choose to move forward on those trimming and mowing activities for which we are in agreement do not require a coastal development permit.

Section 30600 of the Coastal Act requires that a coastal development permit be obtained for any development proposed in the coastal zone unless such development is specifically exempted from the need for a permit. As you note in your letter, Section 30106 defines development, and the definition includes "removal of major vegetation." The term "major vegetation" is not further defined in the Coastal Act or the Commission's regulations. A case by case review of what constitutes "major vegetation" removal. In general, however, the Commission has considered the removal of major vegetation to include removal of such vegetation as environmentally sensitive vegetation, visually significant vegetation, and removal of large trees. In the case of Trinidad Head, much of the vegetation covering the head would be considered to be major vegetation from at least the standpoint of its visual significance. The vegetation is a significant element of the character of the head contributing to its highly scenic nature. Thus, the Commission staff believes that for the most part, removal of the vegetation on the head would constitute "removal of major vegetation" and therefore be a form of development requiring a permit.

Trever Parker, City Planner

July 1, 2011

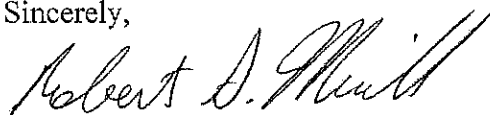
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An exception to the above would be the trimming and mowing over the existing trails and roads on the head and along the sides in the minimum amount necessary to maintain access for hikers on the trail and vehicles on the roads. The roads and trails have been maintained for use by trimming and mowing over time, and new growth occurring within the roads and trails is not a significant element of the character of the head and its removal is thus not major vegetation removal. Your letter suggested that trimming and mowing up to approximately 3 feet out on either side of each road and trail should not be considered removal of major vegetation. We understand that the areas along the roads and trail have not always been mowed and trimmed to that extent and that part of the desire to trim to such widths is to clear the vegetation back further to reduce the frequency that mowing and trimming needs to occur. We are concerned that mowing and trimming the areas along the roads and trails to such widths would affect the visual character of the head and would constitute the removal of major vegetation. **We believe that mowing and trimming over the existing roads to the minimum height required to meet the Cal Fire Code, and mowing and trimming to no more than one foot on either side of the existing roads would avoid major vegetation removal and therefore not require a coastal development permit.**

With regard to mowing and trimming over and along the trails, we believe that mowing as much as three feet on either side of the trails creating a 9-10-foot wide swath of cleared area as proposed would create a visual scar on the landscape of the head and constitute major vegetation removal. **We can agree, however, that maintaining the trails to a total width of 4 feet (including the trail itself and adjoining areas) and a height of 8 feet would not constitute major vegetation removal and therefore would not require a coastal development permit.**

As I noted above, we will be responding in a more complete fashion to your letter we received on June 6th in the near future. If you have any questions or concerns, please call me at (707)445-7833.

Sincerely,



ROBERT S. MERRILL
North Coast District Manager